



Harvest of the Month Training – Follow Up Q & A

Evaluation Questions

Maine DOE Child Nutrition is hiring an evaluator to collect information on the Harvest of the Month (HOM) products being served. This information will be used to show the positive impacts on the school meals program as well as Maine farmers, producers, and local economy.

Q: How do we track dairy if we are already sourcing dairy locally outside of HOM?

A: We will work with the evaluator on this question. In the meantime, keep copies of invoices from milk company or distributor.

Q: Do I need to separate quantities of HOM product on invoices for each school in my district?

A: No, for now as this information is being collected at the district level. But this may change if evaluator believes this information is pertinent.

Q: Do we need dollar amounts for Wild Blueberries and other USDA products from Maine?

A: Yes, the value per case can be found on your monthly USDA foods invoice.

Q: What's the best way to organize HOM related invoices/purchases?

A: They can be organized at the district level, kept in a separate folder, and made available to the evaluator. Additional guidance for organizing invoices and other information will be provided as necessary.

School Garden Questions

Q: Can we use the school nutrition account to buy seeds for a school garden/greenhouse?

A: Yes, if the garden is used within the context of the school meal programs and serves the purpose of operating and improving the school meal program, supplies and equipment for the school garden may be purchased with funds from the nonprofit school food service account (taken from SP 06-2015).

Procurement Questions

Q: If we plan on purchasing products from our school garden for the entire year do we still need to get price quotes from other vendors?

A: SFAs can conduct a procurement for garden produce. In many cases, the purchase may fall below the most restrictive applicable small purchase threshold, so the SFA may request a quote from the school garden operator and other entities. Geographic preference may be used. Due to the low transportation cost of the garden products, it is likely the price for garden products will be competitive with other suppliers.

Procurement regulations do not apply when products are donated. Schools should ensure the product meets their general food safety requirements (taken from SP 06-2015).

Q: When using micro-purchase to procure local products, what qualifies as “distributing purchases equitably”?

A: Micro-purchases enable schools to purchase supplies or services without soliciting competitive quotes, if the school considers the price reasonable. When using the micro-purchase option, schools must distribute micro-purchases equitably. Buying from more than one farm would qualify as distributing purchases.

Local Produce Fund Questions

Q: Can we use the Local Produce Fund during the Summer Food Service Program?

A: Yes; however, it is only available to school districts. A copy of the local produce claim form can be found on the Harvest of the Month website: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/harvestofthemonth/schools>.